



For Immediate Release

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Statement of RPV on Petition Certification

The Republican Party of Virginia issued the following statement:

From the earliest days of the campaigns, RPV has actively told candidates that Virginia's signature requirements could be a difficult legal requirement to meet for those who were new to Virginia politics.

In October 2011, RPV formally adopted the certification procedures that were applied on December 23: any candidate who submitted over 15,000 facially-valid signatures would be presumed to be in compliance with Virginia's 10,000 signature law.

The presumption of compliance was set at 15,000 for a variety of reasons.

First, in the party's long experience with petitions, RPV has never encountered a situation where a candidate who submitted 15,000 signatures has failed to make the ballot (absent cases of obvious fraud).

Second, Virginia's State Board of Elections advises candidates to collect 15,000 or more signatures to be safe, based on their long experience with average failure rates.

Third, RPV adopted the 15,000-signature presumption because the Party wants all of its

candidates to qualify for the ballot. The 15,000-signature presumption served as an incentive for candidates to comply with the law with a safe margin of signatures.

Fourth, under Virginia law, RPV's Chairman is assigned a profound legal obligation to ensure that each candidate has met Virginia's legal requirements. The Party was afforded under Virginia law only 5 days over Christmas to review ballot petitions and signatures. The 15,000-signature presumption was intended to assist the RPV Chairman in meeting his legal obligations in an efficient process that would run quickly while providing the Party and the Commonwealth assurances of legal compliance based upon mathematical experience.

RPV officials encouraged candidates repeatedly, through both counsel and field staff, to submit 15,000 or more signatures in an abundance of caution, so that they would meet the legal requirements.

Candidates were officially informed of the 15,000 rule in October 2011, well in advance of the Dec. 22 submission deadline. The rule was no surprise to any candidate - and indeed, no candidate or campaign offered any complaints until after the Dec. 23 validation process had concluded.

Despite this early notice and RPV's exhortations to candidates, only one candidate availed himself of the 15,000 signature threshold - Governor Mitt Romney. RPV counted Governor Romney's signatures, reviewed them for facial validity, and determined he submitted well over 15,000. **Never in the party's history has a candidate who submitted more than 15,000 signatures had 33 percent invalidated.** The party is confident that Governor Romney met the statutory threshold.

Rep. Ron Paul submitted just under 15,000, and was submitted to signature-by-signature scrutiny on the same basis as the other candidates who submitted fewer than 15,000 signatures. After more than 7 hours of work, RPV determined that Rep. Paul had cleared the statutory 10,000/400 signature standard with ease.

Two other candidates did not come close to the 10,000 valid signature threshold. RPV regrets that Speaker Gingrich and Governor Perry did not meet the legal requirements established by the General Assembly. Indeed, our hope was to have a full Republican field on the ballot for Republican voters to consider on March 6.

The party will discuss the specific nature of their shortfalls if necessary. But the failure of these two candidates to meet the state requirements does not call into question the accuracy of the Party's certification of the two candidates who are duly qualified to appear on the ballot.

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